

## Students

### Student Attendance

St. Edward Public Schools recognizes the necessity of regular school attendance for student performance, achievement, and development of basic skills. Therefore, regular and punctual attendance is required. Parents or guardians are required to report student absences to the school office. The principal and office staff are authorized to require satisfactory explanation from the parent or guardian for the absence of a student for all or any part of the school day to verify the student's location and/or condition. The explanation may be obtained in person, by telephone, or in writing. Absences may be deemed as unlawful by the principal or his/her designee regardless of the explanation. Only school administration has the authority to deem an absence as legitimate or unlawful. Students considered habitually absent without sufficient cause may lose all or partial credit for courses they are currently enrolled in as determined by the attendance committee. (RE: Nebraska Statute 79-209)

When a student has accumulated **Three (3)** absences (daily or per class), the principal can make direct contact with the parent/student reminding him/her of the attendance policy and consequences.

### **5-8-10 Rule**

When a student has accumulated **Five (5) absences** (daily or per class), a direct phone call from the principal or office staff (or certified letter in the case contact cannot be made by phone) will be made to the parent/guardian informing them of the number of absences for that student. The parent/guardian may appeal absences due to illness with documentation from a doctor or school nurse.

When the student has accumulated **Eight (8)** absences (daily or per class), the parent/guardian and student will be required to meet with the Attendance Committee to discuss the situation and develop a collaborative plan to improve regular attendance. At this meeting he/she will be required to qualify accumulated absences. With the agreement of the parent/guardian and the Attendance Committee, special needs or requests could be arranged to best help the student prevent any further absences.

When a student has accumulated **Ten (10)** absences for semester classes or **Twenty 20** for year-long classes, the County Attorney may be notified (RE: Nebraska Statute 79-209) if the student is not more than eighteen years of age. For all students, regardless of age, the Attendance Committee will meet to create a collaborative plan to improve attendance and/or discuss the partial or full loss of credit for the classes that the student is currently enrolled in or to implement an educational plan to serve a student with special needs. This will be done on a case-by-case basis. The Attendance Committee shall make its recommendation in writing to the Superintendent.

### Attendance Committee

The Attendance Committee will consist of:

- Principal
- Superintendent
- At least One Classroom Teachers and/or Guidance Counselor
- Attendance Secretary

An attendance meeting will be held when, at the minimum one administrator, one classroom educator/counselor and the attendance secretary are present. A minimum of three members of the attendance committee must be present for the meeting. All classroom educators are potential members of the attendance committee.

### Excused Absences

An absence is defined as a student not in school while in session. An absence from school will be reported as: an excused absence or an unexcused absence. Excused absences will be verified as one of the following:

1. School sponsored absence
2. Principal approved circumstances which can include:
  - Court appearance
  - Attendance at a funeral for a member of the immediate family (parents, siblings and grandparents)
  - Doctor or dental appointments verified with a note from a doctor's office
  - Principal discretion

Every attempt should be made to schedule appointments outside of normal school hours

Unexcused Absence. An absence which is not excused is unexcused. A student who engages in unexcused or unreported absences may be considered truant as per state law Neb. Rev. Stat. ' 79-201. Truancy is a violation of school rules. Students are subject to disciplinary consequences for trancies.

Pre-arranged absences are not automatically excused and therefore may count toward the student's total school days absent (5-8-10 Rule). Reasonable requests by parents to have students' absences excused will be considered on a case by case basis. All pre-arranged absences must be accompanied by an explanation from the parent specifically stating the reason the student wishes to be absent. Arrangements must be made in school at least one day in advance and the student will be responsible for getting a slip from the office and visiting with teachers and making necessary arrangements for work missed due to the absence, and returning the slip to the office prior to the absence. The Principal shall have the discretion to deny approval for any of the foregoing reasons, depending on circumstances such as the student's number of other absences (5-8-10 Rule), the student's academic status, the tests or other projects which may be missed, and in the case of a family trip, whether the trip could be taken during non-school time and the educational nature of the trip.

Absence Procedure. A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, is issued by the Principal's office.

**Truancy**

A student who is habitually absent, may be considered truant per state law Neb. Rev. Stat 79-209. Truancy is a violation of school rules. The consequence of such action may include receiving zeroes, suspension from classes, or the student may be required to make up the time missed.

**Students who leave the school without permission during the school day will be considered truant.**

- Reporting and Responding: The school administration shall investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, the administration believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school. The school shall render services in its power to compel such child to attend school in an attempt to address the problem of excessive absenteeism
- Excessive Absenteeism: Students who accumulate five (5) absences in a quarter (9-week period) shall be deemed to have “excessive absences”. Such absences shall be determined on a per day basis for elementary students and on a per class basis for secondary students.
- Reporting Excessive Absenteeism to the County Attorney

If the child is absent more than twenty days per year or the hourly equivalent, the attendance officer may file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the person violating the compulsory attendance laws (i.e., the child, the child’s parent, or the person who has legal or active charge or control of the child) resides.

**Tardy Policy**

A tardy is a failure by a student to be in their assigned classroom when the tardy bell rings. Tardy students should go immediately to class. The only way for a student to dismiss/excuse a tardy is to bring a signed explanation from another staff member. Otherwise, the teacher records the tardy and will meet with the student immediately following class time to inform and possibly to arrange a detention. Each teacher will record and administer the following discipline for each tardy per quarter.

High School Policy:

**The following are per quarter per class.**

1 <sup>st</sup> Tardy	Warning
2 <sup>nd</sup> Tardy	15 minutes detention
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tardy	30 minutes detention
4 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	45 minutes detention (Teacher notifies parent/guardian)
5 <sup>th</sup> Tardy	Full Day of In-School-Suspension

Any additional tardiness and the student will receive detention or suspension which will be assigned at the discretion of the shared decision of the teacher and Principal.

\*An excessive tardy is anytime the student is more than 5 minutes late. If the student is late to class by more than half of the class period, the tardy is recorded and treated as an **absence** and will count toward the 5-8-10 rule.

All detention will be served at a time and place agreed upon by both the teacher and the student typically that day. Teachers may arrange to have students serve detention either before or after school, and can arrange to have other staff members supervise the detention. Detention time will double if the student fails to make arrangements with the teacher or fails to appear to detention. Students failing to make arrangements or to appear a second time will be referred to the administration. Students who have multiple detentions with multiple teachers must make arrangements with those teachers to make up a detention per day in order to avoid the consequences of missing/skipping other detentions.

Additional consequences for students that are habitually late and/or failure to report to and makeup tardy detention will be at the discretion of the administration. These consequences may include but not limited to; the loss of open campus privileges, ineligibility for activities, ISS, OSS.

### **Leaving the School Building & Returning After an Absence**

Students who must leave school for any reason during the school day **must check out** at the office before leaving. Students leaving school must be cleared in advance by a note or phone call from the student's parent or legal guardian. Upon returning to school, students are expected to check in at the office. Students who leave without permission and without signing out in the proper manner will be considered truant.

A student returning to school after being absent must bring a written note from his/her parents or guardian stating the reason for the absence unless the absence was prearranged. The excuse should be presented in the principal's office. An admit slip will be issued to the student permitting him/her to return to his/her classes.

When it is necessary for a student to be absent for any reason, the parent or guardian of the student should call the school office to verify the reason for the absence. If no phone call is received by the office, the student will be required to bring a note explaining the reason for the absence. This note must be dated and signed by a parent or guardian. If you forget your note, you will be asked to phone your parents to verify the reason for the absence to the principal or the secretary. **If no phone call or note is received by the office, the absence may be considered truancy.**

### **Attendance is Required to Participate in Activities**

Students must attend school all day of any scheduled school activity in order to participate in the activity. This includes sports contests, practice, music and band events, dances and any other extracurricular activities. Failure to attend on that day will result in a student being withheld from participation in the activity unless the absence is prearranged. Participants are expected to travel with the team to and from out of district activities. The principal retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail.

The student must meet the attendance requirement on the day of the school week in order to be eligible for an activity scheduled for the next school day. Example: If a student has an unexcused absence on Wednesday, the student would be ineligible to participate in an activity

scheduled for the school day on Thursday. (Exceptions can be made at the Principal's discretion to include pre-excused absence and emergency absence.)

**Weekend Activities:** The student must meet the attendance requirement on the last day of the school week in order to be eligible for activities that weekend. Example: If a student has an unexcused absence on Friday, he or she will not participate in a Saturday or Sunday scheduled extra-curricular activity event. Exceptions may be made for extenuating circumstances, such as doctor/dentist appointments or family emergencies. The Principal and/or Athletic Director must approve the exception.

**Seniors' final month-**Any senior who is unexcused during his/her final four weeks of school will be required to make up his/her time prior to graduation. Failure to do so will jeopardize his/her participation in the graduation ceremony. If seniors miss too much school and are in the absence protocol, then they must make arrangements to make up time before graduation. **Senior skip day will be a school sponsored event near the end of the year.** Any other student arranged skip day will result in an unexcused absence.

### **Make-up Work**

**Make-up work for Absences:** students will be given two days to make up work missed for each day absent immediately following the return to school. Example: Two days absence = 4 school days to complete missed work. This is a maximum unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Pursuant to Nebraska Statute §79-201, the mandatory ages of attendance for truancy purposes are as follows: Every person residing in a school district within the State of Nebraska who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who will reach age 6 prior to January 1 of the then-current school year and has not reached 18 years of age, and has not graduated from high school, shall cause such child to enroll in and attend regularly the public schools each day that such schools are open and in session, except when excused by school authorities, or when illness or severe weather conditions make attendance impossible or impractical.

Exceptions for Younger Students. Attendance is not mandatory for a child who has reached the age of 6 years of age prior to January 1 of the then-concurrent school year, but will not reach age 7 prior to January 1 of such school year, if the child's parent or guardian has signed and filed with the school district in which the child resides an affidavit stating either: (1) that the child is participating in an education program that the parent or guardian believes will prepare the child to enter grade one for the following school year; or (2) that the parent or guardian intends for the child to participate in a school which has elected or will elect pursuant to law not to meet accreditation or approval requirements and the parent or guardian intends to provide the Commissioner of Education with a statement pursuant to section §79-1601(3) on or before the child's seventh birthday.

Exceptions for Older Students. Attendance is also not mandatory for a child who: (1) has obtained a high school diploma by meeting statutory graduation requirements; (2) has completed the program of instruction offered by a school which elects pursuant to law not to meet accreditation or approval requirements; or (3) has reached the age of 16 years and has been withdrawn from school in the manner prescribed by law.

Early Withdrawal for Students Enrolled in Accredited or Approved Schools. A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least 16 but less than 18 years of age may withdraw such child from school before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements if an exit interview is conducted and a withdrawal form is signed.

Exit Interview. The process is initiated by a person who has legal or actual charge or control of the child submitting a withdrawal form. The form is to be as prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Upon submission of the form, the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall set a time and place for an exit interview if the child is enrolled in Chadron Public Schools or resides in the Chadron Public School district and is enrolled in a private, denominational, or parochial school.

The exit interview shall be personally attended by:

- The child, unless the withdrawal is being requested due to an illness of the child making attendance at the exit interview impossible or impracticable;
- The person who has legal or actual charge or control of the child who requested the exit interview'
- The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee;
- The child's principal or the principal's designee if the child at the time of the exit interview is enrolled in a school operated by the school district; and
- Any other person requested by any of the required parties who agrees to attend the exit interview and is available at the time designated for the exit interview which may include, for example, other school personnel or the child's principal if the child is enrolled in a private school.

At the exit interview, the person making the written request must present evidence that (a) the person has legal or actual charge or control of the child and (b) the child would be withdrawing due to either:

- Financial hardships requiring the child to be employed to support the child's family or one or more dependents of the child, or
- An illness of the child making attendance impossible or impracticable.

The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall identify all known alternative educational opportunities, including vocational courses of study, that are available to the child in the school district and how withdrawing from school is likely to reduce potential future earnings for the child and increase the likelihood of the child being unemployed in the future. Any other relevant information may be presented and discussed by any of the parties in attendance.

At the conclusion of the exit interview, the person making the written request may sign a withdrawal form provided by the school district agreeing to the withdrawal of the child OR may rescind the written request for the withdrawal.

Withdrawal Form. Any withdrawal form signed by the person making the written request shall be valid only if:

- The child also signs the form, unless the withdrawal is being requested due to an illness of the child making attendance at the exit interview impossible or impracticable, and
- The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee signs the form acknowledging that the interview was held, the required information was provided and discussed at the interview,

and, in the opinion of the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, the person making the written request does in fact have legal or actual charge or control of the child and the child is experiencing either (i) financial hardship, or (ii) an illness making attendance impossible or impracticable.

Early Withdrawal for Students Enrolled in an Exempt School (Home Schools). A person who has legal or actual charge or control of a child who is at least 16 but less than 18 years of age may withdraw such child from school before graduation and be exempt from the mandatory attendance requirements if such child has been enrolled in a school that elects not to meet the accreditation or approval requirements by filing with the State Department of Education a signed notarized release on a form prescribed by the Commissioner of Education.

Legal Reference: Neb. Rev. Stat. 79-201 and 79-209

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